

***ATTACHMENT B***

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To: Board of Prison Commissioners  
**Central Administration**  
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Re: Food Services in Visiting Room at Nevada State Prison

I just returned from a Holiday weekend visit with my fiancé, who is incarcerated at Nevada State Prison in Carson City. Such a trip usually costs me \$400 - \$500 when I am able to stay for all three days of available visitation for inmates in General Population. Visitation begins at 8 a.m. and ends at 2:30 p.m. In the past there has been food available to visitor and their inmates by way of vending machines containing a variety of sandwiches, milk, coffee, soda, chips and other snacks. Last month when I visited there was the usual total of six different vending machines. This seemed to be adequate to serve the people in the visitor's room for the weekend. The ONLY thing that you are allowed to bring into the visitor's room is a clear bag of \$20 worth of quarters so that you can feed yourself and your inmate during visitation time.

My Friday visit last week was on the Fourth of July. I entered the visitor's room and was faced with the fact that four of the six vending machines had been removed from the room. Of the two remaining machines, one was a soda machine that was out of order and the other was the snack machine containing only chips and candy. That day the inmates were provided a Fourth of July hamburger meal for themselves. The visitors were left to either share with the inmate from his single meal or subsist on a bag of chips and water from the public fountain.

On Saturday the only food available to both inmates and visitors were a few remaining bags of chips that were gone by 10 a.m. and small candy items for \$1.25 each. No other food was provided to inmates or visitors. On Sunday the ONLY food available were bags of Skittles and roles of mint Lifesavers. On both Saturday and Sunday by 12 noon more than half of the visitors made the decision to cut their visits short in order to go and obtain the needed nutrition. Myself and a few others chose to stay and go hungry in order to have those precious few hours with our loved one, after having spent so much time and money to travel long distances for that specific purpose.

On Sunday, before the guards allowed my fiancé and the other inmates to enter the Visitor's Room, they were told that NO FOOD would be available to them or the visitors from now on and they would have to make the decision to visit and go hungry or cut their visits short. It was explained to them that visiting was a privilege and not a right and thus there was no obligation to feed them, or even have food available for family members to buy while they are attending visitations.

It is just so outrageous that inmates would be punished for having visitors by depriving them of adequate nutrition. Some of those visitors, like myself, came long distances to visit over the holiday weekend and then had to cut their visits short because there was nothing available to eat. There were elderly people there and young children also, with nothing for them to eat but candy. It is a difficult environment for children at best since most all of the games and toys for them have been removed and now there is nothing to feed them to keep them busy except for sugar filled candies. For most children this serves only to hype them up and make their behavior even more difficult to deal with.

My fiancé and I are both diabetics, like other older individuals there also, I am sure. When an individual takes diabetic medications, it is important to have regular meals in order to maintain blood sugar levels and, of course, they must avoid carbohydrates and sugars found in chips and candy. This last weekend, not only were the inmates punished for no reason, but friends and family members who love them and who were willing to travel and make the effort to visit them, were punished by being denied the ability to obtain adequate nutrition on the premises during visitations and not allowed the option of bringing any food onto the property. It was a "NO WIN" situation for everyone. By the end of my Sunday visit I was very physically ill from the experience and yet needed to make the seven hour drive back to my home in Las Vegas.

I believe that this situation needs to be addressed and some reasonable arrangements made for those individuals whose health or age requires that they have adequate nutrition made available for purchase. If not, then they must be allowed to bring in the appropriate foods that they need. For a diabetic, the right foods are just as important as the right prescription drugs.

In my experience this situation is trivial in comparison to so many other unjust and inhumane practices that my fiancé is forced to endure in this prison system. He is an innocent man convicted only because of the failure of a well-paid attorney to adequately defend his client. I understand that the public, as well as prison authorities and commissioners have little to NO sympathy for the inmates that are warehoused in our prisons. But where is the sympathy and compassion for innocent family members and friends, children and the elderly who are also residents of this state and law abiding, tax paying citizens. It does NOT cost the state ANYTHING to ALLOW a vending machine company to provide the always over-priced food items for purchase by visitors who come prepared with their quarters.

I do not understand the reasoning behind this turn of events, and sincerely request the assistance of this board to remedy the situation of NO NUTRIOUS FOOD available in the Visitor's Room at NSP.

Sincerely,

Wendy Webster